Minor Forest produce plantation scheme

3831. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scheme called minor forest produce plantation in tribal areas is being implemented in the country under special central assistance;

(b) if so, the States covered under that centrally sponsored scheme;

(c) whether it is being implemented in Orissa;

(d) if so, since when and the tribal areas brought under that scheme so far; and

(e) the minor forest produce plantation taken up in the tribal areas of Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) A 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Minor Forest Produce including medicinal plants is being implemented in all the States except Kerala & Delhi for the improvement of the rural poor including tribals.

(c) to (e) This scheme is being implemented by the State Government of Orissa since 1988-90. The tribal areas covered by the State Government under this scheme are in Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Sunaargarh, Phulbani and Ganjam districts. Plantation on 5480 ha. has been taken up in the these tribal areas under the scheme.

Amendment in Indian Forest Act

3832. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to State:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Indian Forest Act;

(b) whether Government have the objective of increasing green cover; and

(c) whether this legislation enable Government to declare deforested land as suitable for emergency afforestation programmes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir. Taking into account the National Forest Policy, 1988 and the emerging imperatives of conservation of Forests and Wildlife and the preservation of the nation's biodiversity, it is proposed to amend the Indian Forest Act of 1927.

(b) The National Forest Policy, 1988 stipulates that the national goal should be to have a minimum of one third land area of the country under forest or tree cover.

(c) The proposed legislation which is being finalised in consultation with State Governments and other agencies is likely to incorporate various measures including strengthening of the existing provisions to facilitate effective forest conservation and development activities.

Development of Herbal Medical Plants

3833. SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1085 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd August, 1994 and state:

(a) What are the details of various central assistance for cultivation and development of herbal medical plants as apprised in part (d) of the above referred question alongwith the names, designations as addresses of the authorities empowered for grant of central assistance serialwise;

(b) whether Government or authorised agencies will allot unutilised/surplus forest land to interested entrepreneurs on long lease for cultivation of herbal plants and setting up of herbal parks under the strict guidelines of his Ministry otherwise rich and most demanded plants for chronic diseases are gradually diminishing with no requisite support from Government as its implementation means large scale employment opportunities in rural areas and friendly natural environment surrounding; and

(c) if reply to part (b) above be in the negative what alternative remedial measures and relief Government propose in this regard?